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Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land—Lord Chatham.

VOL. XXXVII

TORONTO, ONT., DECEMBER 19, 1918.

NO. 51.

Cooperation in Live Stock Marketing

Saskatchewan Live Stock Commission Suggests Cooperative Handling of Live Stock and Meat Products from the Farm to the Consumer—Suggested Plans for Organization and Finance

THE Royal Commission appointed to investigate the marketing of Saskatchewan live stock products has just completed an inquiry, which is probably the most thorough and exhaustive of its kind ever made in Canada. The live stock marketing situation has never been entirely satisfactory to Saskatchewan farmers. The same system is prevailing equally unsatisfactory in other provinces. The report of Saskatchewan's Commission, therefore, is of national rather than provincial importance. Aside from a few sentences dealing with a central market, the recommendations of the Commission will be read with interest everywhere and will find a general application. The suggestion that live stock marketing be linked up with the Saskatchewan Cooperative Creameries, Limited, will be read with particular interest in Ontario in view of the suggested organization of similar companies in that province. The Commission, under the Chairmanship of Hon. W. C. Sutherland, included J. D. MacGregor, Dr. W. R. Motherwell, Dr. J. G. Rutherford and Dr. O. D. Skelton, with W. A. Wilson as Secretary.

Saskatchewan is peculiar in that there is no central well-established livestock market serving the whole of the Province as Winnipeg, for example, serves Manitoba. There are, however, fairly complete plants in operation at Moose Jaw, Regina and Prince Albert, but the bulk of our stock produced in Saskatchewan is marketed outside of the Province. The Commissioners have in view the development of marketing facilities within the Province to take care of their own production of live stock. The report, contrary to custom, is not particularly severe in its criticism of the packing houses which, in spite of their faults, have rendered a wonderful service in supplying sufficient and sanitary facilities for the marketing, curing and distribution of meat products. The Commissioners' recommendations are expressed in the following terms:—

Packing and Marketing Facilities.

1. Local Shipments. The cooperative shipping associations have proved to be the most effective and economical agency for assembling shipments at local points. It is, therefore, recommended that the policy of encouraging the organization of such associations be continued vigorously, and the practice of consigning stock to central markets through this agency be encouraged.

2. Central Market. No public central market for live stock exists within the province. The markets at Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton have done good service in the past and in any case will doubtless continue to draw custom from sections of the province. Yet the actual development of the livestock industry in Saskatchewan and its greater potentialities, together with the long haul to existing markets, will make it advisable to establish a public central market in Saskatchewan as soon as the financial and marketing conditions warrant.

It is recommended, therefore, that the establishment of public stock yards, furnishing all the necessary facilities for handling and trading in live stock, be given consideration in the near future by any cooperative company organized and based upon these recommendations.

3. Packing Plant. It is not sufficient to organize local shipments and to provide a central market. To give confidence and stability to the live stock industry and to secure for the producer the largest possible return for his efforts, it is desirable that the stock raisers of the province should undertake a still further step in the marketing of their product, by the operation of a packing plant. The establish-

ment of a modern packing plant, organized on a cooperative basis and operated in connection with the public stock yards, is the goal toward which, in the opinion of the Commission, the province and the live stock interests should work. As conditions warranted, and subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the activities of the central organization might later be extended to other points by establishing local packing or killing plants.

4. Cold Storage and Selling Facilities. To assist in the marketing of packing house products, and in some cases, of locally killed stock, it is recommended that cold storage warehouses be established as rapidly as possible at strategic points throughout the province. Among later steps in the extension of market facilities, the establishment of a chain of retail stores throughout Saskatchewan and an endeavor to make arrangements with the Cooperative Wholesale Societies of the United Kingdom to take a substantial share of the export surplus are suggested for the consideration of the proposed cooperative company.

Cooperative Organization.

5. Organization. The question of the organization necessary to carry on these packing-house and allied activities is of special importance. There is no doubt, in the opinion of the Commission, that a cooperative company, on much the same lines as the two existing Saskatchewan farmers' cooperative societies, the Saskatchewan Cooperative Elevator Company and the Saskatchewan Cooperative Creameries,

Limited, is the type of organization best fitted for this purpose.

There is more room for question, on general grounds, as to whether a new and distinct company should be formed, or whether the machinery and experience of one of the existing cooperative societies could be utilized. In favor of the latter course it may be urged that a multiplicity of organizations distracts interest, brings danger of overlapping and friction, and makes a heavy call on the number of men, perhaps larger in Saskatchewan than in most communities, but yet limited, who have the judgment, experience and whole-hearted interest necessary to make one more large cooperative undertaking such as this succeed. On the other hand, it may be considered that consolidation is not desirable unless the businesses in question have a wide field in common.

In view of the conditions actually existing in Saskatchewan, however, there seems little room for doubt that the best plan is to make use of existing machinery. The work of the Saskatchewan Cooperative Elevator Company, it is true, is so distinct from that of a packing company, that no material economy or increased efficiency would be likely to follow from an extension of its activities from the field in which it has scored such marked success into that of the live stock industry. The field of operations of the younger cooperative company, the Saskatchewan Cooperative Creameries, Limited, is much more closely connected with that of a packing plant. It is establishing throughout the province modern cold storage warehouses which would serve the purposes of a packing company in no small measure. The cold storage branch of its activities, in fact, bids fair to bulk larger than its creameries work. Experience elsewhere shows that a packing company almost inevitably takes up the work of collecting and selling perishable farm produce of all kinds, a work which the Creameries Company is already undertaking in this province. The marketing outlets and machinery of this organization would serve in a large degree the needs of the live stock interests as well. There is the further consideration that an existing company, already successfully established, can expand into the adjoining field with less outlay than a new organization and at such times as circumstances warrant.

Enlarge the Creamery Company.

Taking into account, then, this close connection in the field of operations and also the more transient financial and marketing conditions arising out of the war which make it advisable to enter upon the establishment of a packing plant with the business in preparation, your Commissioners recommend that the Saskatchewan Cooperative Creameries, Limited, be utilized as the nucleus for the further development of live stock marketing in this province.

If this proposal should commend itself to the interests concerned, it would be necessary eventually to reorganize and enlarge the Creameries Company, with a fresh issue of capital and due representation of live stock men. The immediate field of activity of such a company would be the rapid extension of its cold storage facilities throughout the province, and the development of its selling machinery, leading as speeding as possible to the organization and establishment of one or more central live stock markets and packing plants.

If such an arrangement should not be effected on satisfactory terms, it is recommended that a distinct organization, the Saskatchewan Cooperative Packing Company, be established, and that a demarcation

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The Saskatchewan Method

THE Royal Commission, which recently reported on their investigations into live stock marketing conditions in Saskatchewan, paid high tribute to the two great cooperative companies now operating in that province, the Saskatchewan Cooperative Elevator Company and the Saskatchewan Cooperative Creameries Limited. The Commission suggests that the cattle men can do no better than handle their products on similar lines. It goes further. It suggests that the creamery company enlarge its activities to include the handling of live stock and dressed meat.

Saskatchewan has developed agricultural cooperation as have few other countries. The Saskatchewan method has proved good under the acid test of use. This latest suggestion for the enlargement of cooperative activity reveals the vastness of the field that opens itself to cooperative endeavour. Ontario and Quebec dairy interests are now asking why they, too, cannot control the marketing of their products in true cooperative fashion. Plans are already on foot. All that is needed is broad vision and faith in the ability of farmers to engage cooperatively and successfully in big business. The West seems to have proved that this can be done.